

CRISIS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA: ADOPTING THE FREDRICK TAYLOR THEORETICAL MODEL FOR CRISIS CONTROL

V.O. Igbineweka And Blessing Anukaenyi

Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, City.
Faculty of Education, Godfrey Okoye University Thinkers Corner, Enugu, Nigeria.

Accepted 14 March ,2016

The importance of primary education as the foundation upon which the entire Nigeria educational system hinges was highlighted in the paper. The managerial/organizational structure established to translate the objective of primary education into outcomes was also appraised. Arising from the appraisal, it was discovered that poor management of available resources (men, materials and money) was the reason why the organization and management of primary education in Nigeria is ineffective and inefficient culminating in prohibitive costs. It was concluded that primary education in Nigeria will become less expensive if its organization is restructured to become more innovative and adaptive. It was then recommended among others that teachers' promotion and remuneration should be based on productivity and not just paper qualification and length of service.

Keywords: Primary education, management, crises, organization and control

Introduction

Education, from a holistic point of view, is a continuous, organized and systematic process a society uses to transmit its values and ethos across time and space. The locale of primary education as an integral part of this process is very important (Egwunyenga 2000). As a rule of the thumb therefore about 16.5 percent of human population in countries all over the world is encouraged to compulsorily and freely access primary education. This no doubt underscores the importance of primary education, the reason why countries all over the world according to Nwagwu (2009) and Obasi (2007) are implementing different Education for All (EFA) schemes programmes such as the primary education programme. Nigeria as a nation has had two experiences in this direction. The first is the defunct Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme launched in 1976 while the second experience, the current Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was inaugurated in September, 1999. It is worrisome however that 17 years post implementation of the UBE scheme, objectives of the primary education component of the laudable scheme are yet to be achieved. These objectives include

- The inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively;
- The laying of a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
- Citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the society;
- Character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes;
- Developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment;
- Giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity and;
- Providing basic tools for further educational advancement including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

For instance, illiteracy rate over the years has soared culminating in poor interpersonal communication, youth restiveness, wanton vandalism and the unequalled moral decadence, that pervades the society. Citizenship education is

also seen to be poor, probably the reason why the virtue of patriotism is scarcely observed in the Nigerian people (Ojo, 2006). It is however preposterous that though the above objectives have not been achieved, the budgetary allocation to primary education has continued to be on the increase. For instance, wage bill that fluctuated between 65 and 73 percent of primary education total cost in the 1980s has been reported to be over 80 percent in the recent years (UBEC, 2015). Similarly, the cost of constructing a classroom that was in the neighborhood of N30,000 in 1976/77 school year has skyrocketed to over N2.1 million (UBEC, 2015). There is no doubt that the cost of providing library, laboratories and other facilities like furniture and stationeries have similarly become prohibitive. What this suggests according to Nwabueze (1995), Ijeoma (1998) and Imabekhai (2002) is that existing primary education management/organizational structure may have become seemingly dysfunctional. For example, over 20 billion naira was budgeted for education in the 2003 fiscal year out of which 50 percent was allocated to fund primary education (UBEC, 2015). Although this amount is lower than the budget proposal presented to government by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), the agency has failed to make optimal use of it to achieve the set goals and objectives of primary education in Nigeria. The objective of this paper therefore is to put the problem of primary education management in perspective and suggest reforms that could make the management of primary education effective and efficient. The specific objectives of the paper are to:

- Reflect on the state of primary education management in Nigeria;
- Examine the structure of the organisation of primary education and;
- Adopt the Fredrick Taylor theoretical model for crisis control.

Reflections on the State of Primary Education Management in Nigeria

Management according to Idada (2010) essentially means the prudent utilization of available resources (money, materials and manpower) to achieve set goals. Taking a cue from this postulation, the need to prudently manage available school resources for the achievement of predefined goals, especially in a depressed economy like Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. Attainment of efficiency in primary education in countries such as Ireland, Norway, Japan, Malaysia, Finland, and Chile as reported by the World Bank (2009) is an indication of good prudent use of fiscal resources. The situation is, however, not the same in Nigeria. School administrators since the inauguration of the defunct UPE scheme in 1976 have persistently complained and blamed government for inadequate provision of funds rather than exploiting their managerial skills to prudently use what is available to achieve set goals. The problem of inadequate provision of funds for primary education is not peculiar to Nigeria. Situational analysis by Burrup and Vern (2002) in the United States of America; Bishop (2000) in Great Britain and Lopez-Acevedo (2008) in Mexico show that available funds for primary education management are inadequate to the extent that budget releases are often lower than budget estimates. The consequences of the seeming poor management of available resources in achieving the goals of primary education are therefore legion. First is the problem of incessant strike actions by teachers. In the last ten years, primary school teachers under the aegis of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) have gone on strikes more than 22 times, without a single case reported in Mexico, Japan, and the United States of America where inadequate funds for managing primary education have earlier been reported to also be inadequate. The results of these strikes usually embarked upon to protest inadequate funding has not reversed the funding status, but has rather made quality of primary education poor and objectives not achieved. What makes the situation worse is the payment of salaries to teachers anytime they embark on strike. The implications of such payment for work not done on the school systems are better imagined. Secondly, problems arising from poor management of available teachers such as indolence, absenteeism, late-coming, low morale, etc are observed to be prevalent amongst teachers. The phenomenal "ghost workers" problem that characterizes the Nigerian civil service including the school system is also an indication of poor management. Another problematic area in the management of primary education is the poor utilization of available resources by school administrators. In Edo State for instance, 2 or more teachers from observation serve as class teachers in each classroom for a full day's job. Yet, pupils from these schools from observation are not even taught and when taught, not very well. The result of the study by Ehiamentor (1996) that investigated this problem shows that primary school Head-teachers do not adequately supervise or inspect the activities of teachers under their authority. Out of the 300 respondents that comprised teachers, parents, and pupils 286 (i.e. 95.3 percent) were unanimous in reporting that primary school Head-teachers lack the ability to direct teachers do their jobs. What this suggests is that the seeming moribund school organization is not necessarily because resources are inadequate but because available resources are poorly utilized (Nwadiani, 1998; Durosaro, 2000; Adeyemi and Igbineweka, 2001).

Organization of Primary Education in Nigeria

A school organisation is an established structure that predicts and regulates the behaviour of both teachers and students. Thus, the school goal is achieved only to the extent that teachers and students subject their individual expectations to the overall goal of the school (Wallace, 1991). Experience has shown that the school organization,

particularly the public primary school system in Nigeria has failed to live up to expectation. A large proportion of public funds have been invested in the provision of primary education in Nigeria since 1976 when access to primary education was universalized. Yet, problems of illiteracy, moral decadence, ineptitude, unemployment, school dropouts abound because the organizational structure that predict behaviour appears to be dysfunctional and unproductive (Igomo, 2011 and Nwadiani, 2014). Previous attempts through legislation to re-organize the structure and management of primary education have not yielded the desired results. Education Act No. 17 of 1952; government take-over of schools (validation) Decree of 1975; local government edict No. 3 of 1976, Decree no. 31 of 1988; and Decree no. 3 of 1991 including the basic education Act of 2007 have persistently failed to yield the desired results. The current Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme has also not been able to bring about any desirable changes because of its implementation that is observably fraught with poor management of available resources (Aduke, 2005). An examination of the present primary education organisation reveals a debilitating conflict of roles among various agencies established by government to manage primary education. For example, the conflict between States and local governments as regards the control of funds of primary education has not yet been resolved. Also, the non- delineation of specific functions for Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), the States Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEB); the Ministries of Education and; the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) has severely weakened the organization of primary education in Nigeria. The enormity of conflict in the primary education organisation is better appreciated in figure 1.

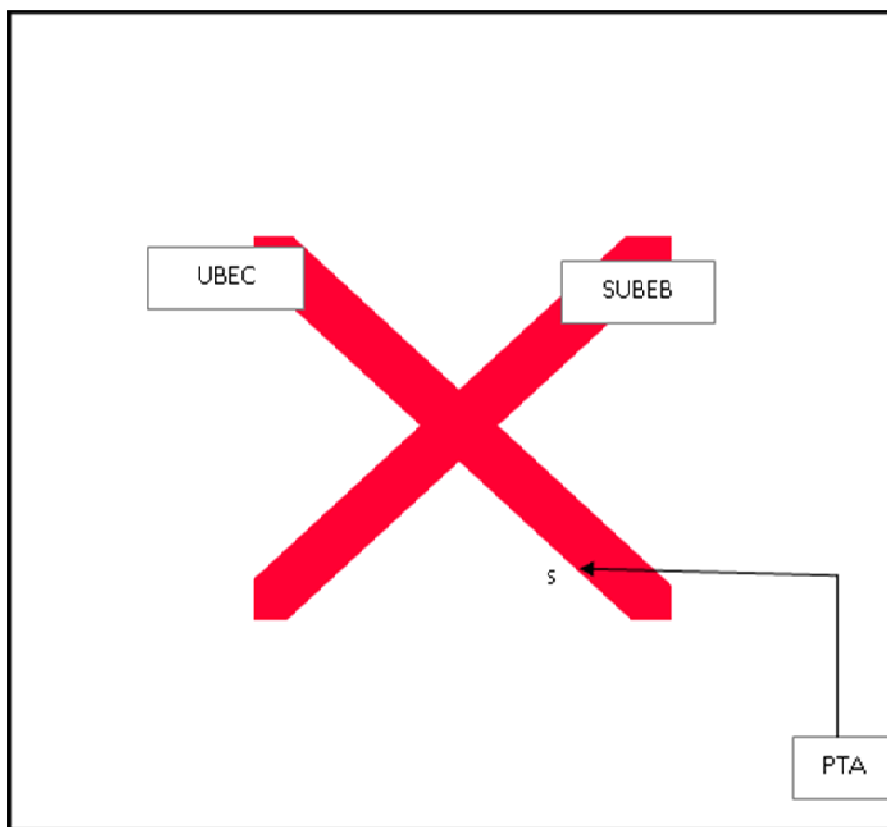


Figure 1 Organogramme showing the Organization and Management of Primary Education in Nigeria

A look at Figure 1 shows that LEAs receive conflicting instructions from UBEC and SUBEB while the primary school Head Teacher is overwhelmed with conflicting directives from UBEC; SUBEB and LEAs. The teachers are the worse hit by the uncoordinated directives from all the primary education management agencies in the country. These observed conflicts and confusion in the management of primary education in Nigeria may be the reason why the problems of bureaucratic bottlenecks, corruption and soldiering characterize the Nigerian primary school system.

Adopting the Fredrick Taylor Theoretical Model for Crisis Control

Attempts have been made to identify the problems that may have been impeding the effective management/organization of primary education in Nigeria. There is no doubt therefore that until the primary school organization is overhauled to remove these observed clogs, attainment of the objectives of primary education will remain elusive. It is germane

therefore that these identified drawbacks be exterminated for the set objectives to be achieved. One way to do this is to adopt the Fredrick Taylor theoretical model to control the identified conflicts in the organization. A schematic discussion of how this can be done to reform the management of primary education is as follow.

The large daily task principle. The job of primary school teachers should be re-evaluated, properly described, and defined. Such jobs are therefore required to be carefully circumscribed to require a full day's effort to complete. The present arrangement that allows teachers resume work by 8:00am and close officially at 1:00pm, a working period of just five hours instead of 8 hours (required for a full day's pay) may no longer appear feasible. The period between 1:00pm and 4:00pm could be used for lesson plan preparation and evaluation of students' continuous assessment under the supervision of Head teachers as the practice in Malaysia, Singapore and even in schools owned and managed by private investors in Nigeria.

The principle of standard condition. Every teacher must be made to strictly comply with government approved scheme of work in teaching his or her subjects. To enforce compliance, Head-teachers are required to submit Teaching Job Performance Evaluation Report (TJPER) on every teacher to appropriate supervisory agencies before incremental awards and promotion are granted. The TJPER that will indicate the level of productivity of every teacher should in addition be considered for remuneration and payment of allowances.

The principle of high pay for success. Teachers' salary under this reform should be based on productivity and not on any other consideration as it is done in many corporate organizations. Teachers who work hard to effectively and efficiently accomplish assigned task should be given higher pay than their colleagues with the same qualification and experience but less productive.

Loss in case of failure principle. Teachers who come to work late including those that absent themselves from duty without acceptable excuses should not be paid for the period they do not work. Teachers should also be made to pay for any act of negligence or for any duty of care that is willfully abused.

The principle of expertise in large organization. Teaching should be professionalized in such a way that only registered professional teachers with the requisite experience to motivate and impart knowledge should be the only one allowed to teach. Specialist teachers for particular subjects in the sciences, physical education, language arts, social studies and mathematics should be the only ones that are pay-rolled for teaching services.

The principle of hierarchy of authority. Both Head-teachers and subject teachers should know who they are accountable to. Teaching and non-teaching personnels should be responsible to their Head teachers who in turn should give account of their superintendship to the PTA, LEAs and SUBEB at different times. Similarly, SUBEB should render its account of performance to the respective State Ministries of Education that are in turn expected to be answerable to the State Governments. In addition, State Ministries of Education should be responsible to UBEC that in this reform should report directly to the Federal Ministry of Education. The Federal Ministry of Education should be responsible to the Federal Government who in turn will render account to the national assembly, that is, the Nigerian people who pay the taxes government uses to finance education as a social service.

The principle of impersonality. Recruitment, deployment, remuneration, transfer, and discipline of teachers hitherto highly personalized and politicized should be checkmated. Instead, all communications in the organization should be strictly formal and impersonal.

Conclusion

Attainment of the laudable objectives of primary education in Nigeria has remained elusive. This is so because the management/organization of primary school system is fraught with several problems ranging from bottlenecks in the bureaucracy; poor utilization of available resources; poor supervision and inspection of teaching and learning among others. The emerging crisis in the management of primary education is likely to deepen unless the reforms proposed in this paper are considered for implementation.

Recommendations

- ❖ Available school resources (manpower, materials and money) are observed to be in short supply in several primary schools. This has been the situation in the recent past and is likely to remain unchanged against the backdrop of dwindling fiscal resources occasioned by the fall in the price of crude oil, the main stay of the Nigerian economy. Therefore school administrators should be equipped with requisite skills and knowledge to prudently manage available resources.

- ❖ Experience over the years has shown that the purpose of establishing SUBEBs and LEAs at states and local government areas respectively to control primary education has not been achieved. Their roles have been rather conflicting with the activities of UBEC at the national level. The relationship among the agencies should therefore be purposefully streamlined by assigning them specific roles to perform.
- ❖ The culture of accountability should be institutionalised in the organization and management of primary schools in Nigeria.
- ❖ Lastly, the management of primary schools should be cost effective. This can be done by allocating properly described jobs to only teachers with obvious capacity to perform such jobs. Payment for such jobs should then be based on productivity and not on years of service or age of the teacher.

References

- Adeyemi, J.K and Igbineweka, V.O. (2001). "Enrolment projection and cost implication of UBE in Nigeria" in Nwagwu N.A et al (eds.) *Current issues in educational management in Nigeria*. Pp. 67-80, Benin City: NAEAP.
- Aduke, A.F. (2005). Conflict management for effective administration in Nigerian universities. *International journal of educational administration, planning and research*, Vol. 2(1), pp. 31-38.
- Bishop, G. (2000). *Alternative strategies for education*. London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
- Burrup, P.E and Vern, B. (2002). *Financing education in a climate of change*. Boston: Alyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Chartered Institute of Personnel Management (2023). *Advanced human resource management*. Lagos: CIPM House.
- Durosaro, D.O. (2000). "School financial management" in D.O. Durosaro and S. Ogunsaju (eds). *The craft of education management*. Ibadan: Heinemann. Pp. 125-133.
- Egwunyenga, E.J. (2000). Conflict management and resolution in higher technical education. *Journal of educational review*, No. 1, pp. 11-19.
- Egwunyenga, E.J. (2000). Perceived influence of conflict between academic and non-academic staff on university administration in Nigeria. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Benin.
- Ehiametalor, E.T. (1996). Monitoring of learning achievements of primary school pupils in Nigeria. *FGNcmd UNICEF Technical Report on Education in Nigeria*. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Education.
- Federal Ministry of Education. (1999). *Implementation guidelines for the UBE program*. Abuja: Government Press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2008). *Republic service rules*. Abuja: Federal Government Press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1988). *Decree No. 31* Lagos: Government Press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1991). *Decree No. 3* Lagos; Government Press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2001). *Manual on UBE management*. Abuja: FME.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2004). *National policy on education*. Abuja: Government Press.
- Idada, W. (2010). *Human resources management and the Nigerian civil service*. Benin City: The Guid Press.
- Igomo, C.K. (2011). *Nigerian employment and labour relations law and practice*. Lagos: Concept Publications Limited.
- Ijeoma M.E.(1998). "Theories of administration" in M. Nwadiani M. (%&.) *Education management for Sub-Saharan Africa*. Benin City: Nigerian Society for Education Planning in Association with Monose Amalgamates pp. 103-120.
- Imabekhai, C.I. (2002). Management of industrial conflicts in educational institutions for enhanced personnel productivity. *International journal of educational planning and administration* 1(1), pp. 82-91.
- Lopez-Acevedo, G. (2008). "Learning Outcomes and School Cost-Effectiveness in Mexico: The Pare Program" A World Bank Mimeograph.
- Nwabueze, B.O. (1995). *Crises and problems in education in Nigeria*. Lagos: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Nwadiani, M. (1998). "Accountability in education" in Nwadiani (Ed.) *Educational management for Sub-Saharan Africa*. Benin City: Nigerian Society for Education Planning in Association with Monose Amalgamates pp. 21-33.
- Nwagwu, C.C. (2009). The political environment of decision making in education: the case of University development in Nigeria. *ESUT Journal of education* vol. 2, NO. 1, pp. 77-85.
- Obasi, E. (2007). Structural adjustment and gender access to education in Nigeria. *Gender and education* vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 161-171.
- Ojo, J.A.T. (2006). New strategy for funding higher education in Nigeria. In B. Borishade and P. Okebukola (Eds) *Repositioning higher education in Nigeria* (pp. 291-304), Ibadan: Heinemann Education Books Nigeria Plc.
- Taylor, F. (1911). *Classical organizational thought*. IL: More Publishing Co. Inc.
- Universal Basic Education (2015). The status of funding basic education scheme in Nigeria. *UBEC statistical digest*. Abuja: UBEC.
- Wallace, M. (1991). "Contradictory interest in policy implementation: The case of LEA development plans for schools". *Journal of Educational Policy* 5(4), 385-400.
- World Bank (2009). *World development indicators*. Washington. DC: The World Bank.